over 100 Polish schools. The survival of even a small Polish minority in Lithuania will make it possible for Polish nationalists to maintain their traditional claim on the city of Vilna. Ba. 563

The number of Jews in the Baltic States was also drastically reduced, but in their case the Germans, not the Soviet Government, were chiefly responsible. Many thousands of Baltic Jews were exterminated by the Germans because the Soviet authorities had failed to evacuate them in time.

From a narrow-minded, nationalistic point of view the Baltic peoples might perhaps have welcomed at one stage the disappearance of national minorities, which until 1939 had lived in their midst. In the event they discovered that the departure of Swedes, Poles, Germans and Jews was hardly to their advantage since it only made room for Russian colonists.

SOVIET ESTONIA

Of the three Baltic peoples the Estonians are in the greatest danger of falling victim to the Russian advance. This is due mainly to the fact that the Estonians are fewer in number than either Latvians or Lithuanians. Their numerical inferiority is aggravated by the fact that their natural increase is lower than that of the majority of Western European peoples. In 1938 the rate of natural increase in Estonia was 1·7 per 1,000 inhabitants, which was the lowest of all European countries with the exception of France, and, on account of the Civil War, Spain. In 1940 the situation in Estonia deteriorated to such an extent that a decline of 0·6 per 1,000 was recorded. Ba. 163 Es. [163]

In Latvia the position in regard to the population increase is slightly better than in Estonia, its index being at 4·9 in 1938, and 3·7 in 1940. Both Estonians and Latvians are peoples with a Western European birth-rate living in Eastern Europe and they will undoubtedly suffer from all the inconveniences inherent in such an anomaly, in the first place from the pressure exercised by the population of the Soviet Russian Empire whose rate of increase was 17·8 in 1938.

The Russian pressure will become particularly active and real in the case of Estonia because of the close proximity of that country to Leningrad. Leningrad, with a population of over 3,000,000, must inevitably extend its grip over the whole of Estonia with its 1,000,000 inhabitants, and Estonia will then be degraded to a kind of economic annexe of the second largest Soviet city. The construction of a gas pipe-line linking the gas-works of Kokhtla-Järve in Eastern Estonia with Leningrad is an indication that such a development is well under way. Kokhtla-Järve, a new Estonian town which was built during the first post-war Five-Year Plan, is the 'centre of the Estonian Donbass' and is expected to become the largest shale-producing centre in the U.S.S.R. Es. 361 315 Es. [316]

The development of the new shale mines, shale-refining plants, electric